

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEXICO 06626 060210Z

21-12

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

AID-20 CIEP-02 COME-00 TRSE-00 EB-11 INT-08 OMB-01

AEC-11 SCI-06 EPA-04 CEQ-02 DRC-01 AGR-20 /175 W

----- 016722

R 060026Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7809

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 6626

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, MX

SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO SALINITY AGREEMENT.

REF: MEXICO 6507

1. PRESS REACTION TO THE COLORADO RIVER SALINITY AGREEMENT REPORTED IN REFTEL HAS BEEN ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY FAVORABLE. MOST EDITORIALISTS SEEM TO VIEW AGREEMENT AS LONG OVERDUE BUT A DISTINCT TRIUMPH FOR MEXICAN DIPLOMACY. SEMI-OFFICIAL NACIONAL CALLS AGREEMENT A "TESTIMONY TO THE FIRMNESS OF ECHEVERRIA'S ADMINISTRATION." EL HERALDO, WITH MORE ENTHUSIASM THAN ACCURACY, SAID AGREEMENT MEANT WATER REACHING MEXICO WOULD HAVE MAXIMUM SALINITY OF 115 PPM.

2. EXCEPTION TO GENERAL EDITORIAL SATISFACTION WAS PUBLICATION ON SEPTEMBER 4 BY LEFTIST-NATIONALIST EXCELSIOR OF ARTICLE REPORTING CRITICISM OF THE AGREEMENT BY U.S. ORGANIZATION, COMMITTEE FOR AN OPEN SOCIETY, HEADED BY WILLIAM HIGGS. QUOTING IN PART FROM A LETTER FROM HIGGS TO SENATOR FULBRIGHT, THE ARTICLE EMPHASIZED HIGG'S FOUR MAIN POINTS:

(A) WITH REGARD TO THE QUALITY OF WATER TO BE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 06626 060210Z

RECEIVED BY MEXICO, HIGGS STATED THAT "...DESPITE THE

IMPRESSION OF THE MAJORITY OF THE MEXICAN PRESS, MEXICAN FARMERS WILL NOT RECEIVE WATER OF THE SAME QUALITY RECEIVED BY THEIR NORTH AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS." HE CONTINUED THAT WHILE THE UPPER COLORADO VALLEY RESIDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO WATER CONTAINING FROM 300 TO 400 PARTS PER MILLION AND THE PERSON IN THE VICINITY OF THE IMPERIAL DAM WATER FROM 800 TO 900 PPM, MEXICO WILL RECEIVE WATER OF AN AVERAGE SALINITY OF 1010 PPM. HIGGS ADDED THAT THE US WILL THEREFORE BE ABLE TO EXPORT WATER OF A MUCH HIGHER SALINITY CONTENT, AS MUCH AS 1400 PPM, WHICH, IN A TIME OF DROUGHT, HE ARGUED, WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO DESTROY ANY CROPS PLANTED IN MEXICO.

(B) HIGGS' SECOND POINT WAS THAT MR. BROWNELL'S PROMISE TO USE RESERVOIR WATERS OF THE COLORADO RIVER AS NECESSARY TO ASSURE MEXICO WATER NO HIGHER THAN 1010 PPM IN SALINITY WOULD, IF IMPLEMENTED, VIOLATE ARTICLE 10 OF THE TREATY OF 1944;

(C) HIGGS STRESSED THAT THE US, ALTHOUGH PROHIBITED FROM DUMPING ATOMIC WASTES INTO THE CANAL, WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY EMPTY INTO THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA, MAY DECIDE TO DISPOSE OF POISONOUS INDUSTRIAL OR CHEMICAL WASTES THEREBY.

(D) LASTLY, HIGGS CRITICIZED THE PROVISION PROVIDING THAT THE AGREEMENT ENTER INTO FORCE IMMEDIATELY FOR MEXICO BUT ONLY WHEN CONGRESS APPROVES IT FOR THE US.

3. HIGGS CONCLUDED HIS LETTER BY SAYING THAT HIS COMMITTEE BELIEVES THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE US TO ARRIVE AT A JUST

AND TRULY FAIR SOLUTION TO THE SALINITY PROBLEM AND BY HOPING THAT SENATOR FULBRIGHT WILL QUESTION SECRETARY-DESIGNATE KISSINGER ABOUT THE SALINITY AGREEMENT DURING HIS CONFIRMATION HEARINGS LATER THIS WEEK.

4. COMMENT: AS USUAL, EXCELSIOR WAS EAGER TO PRESENT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 06626 060210Z

INFORMATION POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING TO THE US. UNFORTUNATELY, IT PRESENTED THE GIST OF THE CRITICISM OF THE COMMITTEE FOR AN OPEN SOCIETY, WHICH THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS IS COMPOSED OF MR. HIGGS AND TWO OR THREE FRIENDS, WITHOUT RECTIFYING ITS ERRORS. THE ARTICLE DID NOT MENTION THAT THE COLORADO RIVER WATER NATURALLY INCREASES IN SALINITY AS IT MOVES DOWNSTREAM, THAT IT WAS UNDERSTOOD BY BOTH PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT DURING ITS NEGOTIATION THAT THE

US WOULD NOT DUMP POISONOUS WASTES INTO THE CANAL TO BE
CONSTRUCTED TO DISPOSE OF THE BRINE FROM THE DESALTING
PLANT, WHICH WILL BE LOWER IN SALT CONTENT THAN THE
WATERS OF THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA; AND THAT MEXICO HERSELF
WANTED THE AGREEMENT TO BE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY SO THAT,
INTER ALIA, PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA COULD MENTION IT IN HIS
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGRESS LAST SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1.
MCBRIDE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MEXICO06626
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS MC BRIDE
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730951/aaaablz.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: MEXICO 6507
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Jan-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <27 FEB 2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS REACTION TO SALINITY AGREEMENT.
TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, MX
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005